containment of inflation remains high on the agenda of the Government. Anti-inflationary policies of the government include strict fiscal discipline, rationalization of duties of essential items, effective supply demand management of essential commodities through liberal tariff and trade policies, and procurement through public sector agencies. The Monetary policy of Reserve Bank of India, while being conducive to economic growth, has attempt to contain inflationary expectations arising out of uncertainties in domestic and international environment.

Bringing down rising prices

3009. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has reduced import duty and banned export of certain products to bring down rising price index;

(b) if so, the details of the products and share of these products in consumer price index;

(c) whether this step of Government will bring relief to the consumers; and

(d) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Import of wheat, rice and pulses is permitted at zero duty. Export of wheat, non-basmati rice and pulses has been banned.The custom duty on edible oils has been reduced to zero and 7.5% for crude and refined varieties respectively.

Weights of these items in the commodity basket of Consumer Price Index for industrial workers (CPI-IW based on 2001=100) are as follows:

* cereals and products (13.48 per cent),
* pulses and products (2.91 per cent) and
* oils & fats (3.23 per cent).

(c) to (d) These steps are expected to bring relief to the consumers.

Prices of petrol and diesel in country

†3010. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the prices of petrol and diesel are comparatively low in the prominent countries of Asia than in India;

(b) if not, the details of petrol and diesel prices in China, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan and Nepal in January, 2008;

(c) the details of the prices of the these products in India; and

(d) the reasons of such difference in the prices of these products?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.